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TO: Secretary of State

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ORIGINAL OBJECTIVES OF C-130 FLIGHTS AS PROPOSED LAST YEAR WERE TO ASSERT RIGHT TO FLY ABOVE 10,000 FEET, TEST SOVIET REACTIONS AND OPEN UP HIGHER ALTITUDES FOR REGULAR USAF FLIGHTS AND IF POSSIBLE EVENTUALLY FOR COMMERCIAL FLIGHTS. AT THAT TIME WE HAD BRITISH AND FRENCH SUPPORT FOR SUCH A PROGRAM.

THE TIMING OF RECENT C-130 FLIGHTS BROUGHT NEW ELEMENTS INTO PICTURE, NAMELY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FLIGHTS AND FOREIGN MINISTERS' CONFERENCE. AS RESULT, SOVIETS TOOK FORMAL GOVERNMENTAL NOTICE OF FLIGHTS AND PLAYED UP POLITICAL ASPECTS OF OPERATION IN RELATION TO THAT CONFERENCE.

ON OTHER HAND BITTER BRITISH REACTION HAS CREATED DISUNITY IN WESTERN RANKS WHICH SOVIETS CAN BE EXPECTED TO EXPLOIT, AND SOVIETS MAY INTENSIFY HARASSMENT IN ORDER TO DRIVE US FURTHER APART.

I THEREFORE FEEL STRONGLY THAT FLIGHTS OVER 10,000 FEET SHOULD NOT BE REPEATED AT LEAST BEFORE APRIL 29 FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING, WHERE THE MATTER SHOULD BE TRIPARTITELY DISCUSSED. WE SHOULD FIRST COME TO UNDERSTANDING WITH BRITISH AND FRENCH, AND DEMONSTRATE A UNITED FRONT AT GENEVA BY TAKING INITIATIVE IN RAISING CORRIDOR ISSUE WITH SOVIETS. WE FORCED THE ISSUE WITH SOVIETS IN FIRST PLACE AND WE SHOULD NOT LET THEM PUT US ON DEFENSIVE. OUR CASE IS GOOD.

BRUCE

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